How Do You See Disability?

The Arc
Mississippi

Cindy Dittus
UMMC
February 11, 2021
Program Agenda

- Discuss the types of disabilities
- People First Philosophy
- Discuss disability statistics
- Discuss strategies for more effective service delivery when someone has a disability
What Do You See?
People First Philosophy
The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.
~Mark Twain
Focus on the **person** NOT the disability!!

Labels belong on cans, not people

Normal is a setting on the dryer
A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).

https://www.cdc.gov/
Although “people with disabilities” sometimes refers to a single population, this is actually a diverse group of people with a wide range of needs.

Two people with the same type of disability can be affected in very different ways.

Some disabilities may be hidden or not easy to see.
Disabilities are classified according to six limitations:

- **hearing** (deafness or serious difficulty hearing)
- **vision** (blindness or serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses)
- **cognitive** (serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition)
- **ambulatory** (difficulty walking or climbing stairs)
- **self-care** (a condition that causes difficulty dressing or bathing)
- **independent living** (physical, mental, or emotional condition that impedes doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor or shopping)
Types of Disabilities

- Developmental Disabilities
- Intellectual Disability
- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Epilepsy
- Learning Disorders

- Severe major mental disorder
- Traumatic brain injury
- Degenerative brain diseases
- Permanent damage – stroke
- Organic brain damage
- FASD–Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder
Means a severe, chronic disability of an individual 5 years of age or older that:

- Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
- Is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
- Is likely to continue indefinitely;
- Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity:
  - Self-care;
  - Receptive and expressive language;
  - Learning;
  - Mobility;
  - Self-direction;
  - Capacity for independent living; and
  - Economic self-sufficiency.
Developmental Disability
Developmental Disabilities Act, section 102(8)

- Reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, supports, or other assistance that is of lifelong or extended duration and is individually planned and coordinated, except that such term, when applied to infants and young children means individuals from birth to age 5, inclusive, who have substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental disabilities if services are not provided.
 Intellectual disability is a term used when there are limits to a person’s ability to learn at an expected level and function in daily life. Levels of intellectual disability vary greatly in children. Children with intellectual disability might have a hard time letting others know their wants and needs, and taking care of themselves. Intellectual disability could cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than other children of the same age. It could take longer for a child with intellectual disability to learn to speak, walk, dress, or eat without help, and they could have trouble learning in school.
Intellectual disability can be caused by a problem that starts any time before a child turns 18 years old – even before birth. It can be caused by injury, disease, or a problem in the brain. For many children, the cause of their intellectual disability is not known. Some of the most common known causes of intellectual disability – like Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, fragile X syndrome, genetic conditions, birth defects, and infections – happen before birth. Others happen while a baby is being born or soon after birth. Still other causes of intellectual disability do not occur until a child is older; these might include serious head injury, stroke, or certain infections.
People with developmental & other substantial disabilities represent at least 12–15% of the population.

- 3–5% developmental disability
- 15% of adults over 55 have cognitive disabilities
- 25% of adults over 75 have such disabilities
- Children with developmental disabilities represent 12% of the population
  - 60% of those acquired the disability post-birth
- 2+ million children have fetal alcohol syndrome
37 STATES STILL HAVE INSTITUTIONS

New Decade, Old Injustices.
Cognitive Disabilities

- Treat adults as adults
- Adjust your method of communication
- Use concrete language—be specific
- You may need to repeat yourself
- Provide information gradually and clearly
- Be patient
Hearing Disabilities

- Ask how s/he prefers to communicate
- Talk directly to the person who is deaf even if an interpreter is being utilized
  - don’t turn your back
- speak in a clear, expressive manner but
- DON’T OVER–ENUNCIATE OR EXAGGERATE WORDS
Speech Disabilities

- Be patient
- Be friendly
- Give your undivided attention
- Ask the person for help in communicating
- Speak in your regular tone of voice
Visual Disabilities

- Identify yourself when approaching a person who is blind
- Appropriate to touch the arm lightly of the person so s/he knows you are talking to him/her
- Be specific in your communication
Physical Disabilities

- Don’t make assumptions about the person’s physical abilities
- Respect personal space
- Position yourself at eye level to the person with a physical disability
8–10 YEARS:
Average Time on Waiting List for Disability Services
Due to growing awareness and strong advocacy, it is an accepted belief that virtually all persons with developmental and/or physical disabilities are more at risk for being victimized than other individuals.
People with developmental and other substantial disabilities often times are invisible in our society.

Crimes against those with disabilities are under-reported, under-investigated, under-prosecuted and un-punished.
Susceptibility

- People with disabilities desire to be accepted and to please others, along with a trusting nature.

- Our folks are taught to comply with any and all requests.

- Our folks are not empowered to say “No”.
Types of Abuse

- Physical Abuse
  8 times greater chance of abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Emotional Abuse/Neglect
- Sexual abuse
  - General population
    - pre-18 yo: 25% females; 20% males
    - post 18 yo: 13% female victim of rape at least 1 x
    - 20% reported
Startling Statistics

- POPULATION of those with Developmental Disabilities
  7 times greater chance of sexual abuse
  83% of women; 32% of men
  49.6% experienced 10+ sexual assaults

- PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS
  81% Physically or sexually abused
Accommodations
The reality is that people with a lesser ability to easily talk about, describe or report crimes against them (such as children, people with speech difficulties, people living in institutional settings, the elderly who have various types of communication challenges, and people with varying types of cognitive/intellectual disabilities) and those who are unwitting suspects often go unheard and ignored in America’s criminal justice system.
NEW DECADE, OLD INJUSTICES.

600+ people with disabilities murdered by caregivers
Who is Doing The Abuse?

- PHYSICAL ABUSE

- 1–3% stranger
- 99% known to victim
- 55% assaults incestual
- 97% male aggressors
Who is Doing the Abuse?

SEXUAL ABUSE

- 38% Parents
- 16% other (babysitter, church, friend, clergy, van driver, care attendant
- 11% step/foster sib
- 8% stranger
- 7% grandparent/aunt/uncle
- 7% older student
- 5% boyfriend of parent
People With I/DD
Sexually Assaulted
at 7x the Rate of People
Without Disabilities

New Decade, Old Injustices.
Police did not respond to about 23% of reported violent crime against people with disabilities, compared to about 10% of reported violent crimes against victims without disabilities.

71% of crimes of people with intellectual disabilities go unreported

80–85% criminal abuse of residents of institutions unreported

40% fear of reprisal (employees and victims)
Review
Guidelines for communicating with persons with disabilities

- Use People First Language!!!
- Be professional
  - don’t patronize the person with disabilities
- If in doubt, ASK
  - don’t be afraid to make a mistake when meeting the person with a disability.
- If you offer assistance, and the person declines, don’t insist
Guidelines for communicating with persons with disabilities

- TRY TO RELAX
- Respect personal boundaries
  - don’t touch, pat, hug without permission
- Talk to the person with the disability, not the companion
- Educate yourself about the disability and adapt your communication to it
Questions?

Join the Fight for Disability Rights.

NEW DECADE, OLD INJUSTICES.
How Do You See Disability?

Cindy Dittus
The Arc of Mississippi
601.355.0220
www.arcms.org